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SUBJECT: Visit of UN High Commissioner for Refugees
to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

1. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres arrived in Kinshasa December 13 to assess the humanitarian situation in North Kivu, where 800,000 people have been displaced by ongoing armed conflicts. He traveled to North Kivu December 15-17, visiting IDP camps near Goma and Gasasa in Kiwanja, north of Rutshuru town.

2. Guterres told reporters he was "shocked" by the testimonies of the atrocities women and children had experienced. He deplored the current tragedy and promised that UNHCR would enhance its cooperation with other UN agencies to improve living standards in the province. He also promised to knock on all doors to find a durable solution to the present conflict. He deplored the presence of child soldiers in armed groups, notably on the front lines.

3. Guterres returned to Kinshasa and met with President Kabila December 17 in Kinshasa before returning to Geneva.

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